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Letter dated 22 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith, for the members of the Security Council, the official statement of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see annex) concerning the allegations of serious human rights violations attributed to members of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo in a video containing horrific images that was shown over the past weekend on social media.

The Government wishes to reassure the Security Council that it is taking the issue extremely seriously. It has already deployed a commission of inquiry to the two provinces affected and will not fail to keep the Council informed of the progress of the investigations.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ignace **Gata Mavita**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 22 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Government statement

22 February 2017

In order to inform the public at both the national and international levels with regard to the continuing allegations of serious human rights violations attributed to members of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) in the city of Mwanza Lomba (Kasaï-Oriental Province) following the broadcast on social media of horrific images filmed by an anonymous videographer, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo wishes to state the following:

- Following the conclusion of military operations targeting the terrorist group operating under the name of the "Kamwina Nsapu militia" in Mwanza Lomba, Katengayi and Katende, near Mbuji-Mayi, and before the aforementioned images were broadcast online, senior members of the local FARDC interrogated some officers and non-commissioned officers involved in these operations who are alleged to have perpetrated abuses and atrocities and then handed them over to the military prosecution services attached to the higher military courts of Mbuji-Mayi (Kasaï-Oriental Province) and Kananga (Kasaï-Central Province).

- Immediately following the broadcast on social media of the horrific video depicting the events, the Ministry of National Defence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on the instructions of the President of the Republic and Supreme Commander of FARDC, deployed to the two provinces a commission headed by senior military judges in order to verify the facts, further investigate facts not yet taken into consideration and strengthen, where appropriate, the role of the military judges operating in Mbuji-Mayi and Kananga. Since then, other interrogations have taken place in order to verify the allegations.

- The investigation is ongoing. The Government wishes to assure the public that everything will be done in accordance with both national and international laws and the FARDC operating instructions and rules of engagement, based on the principle of zero tolerance for violations thereof as well as for all other breaches of discipline by military personnel in its ranks.

- The commission of senior military judges deployed to the two provinces will also endeavour, as appropriate, to establish the time, place and underlying motivations for the filming and anonymous broadcast of the horrific images contained in the aforementioned video. As the case now stands, the images do not reflect the actions for which the undisciplined soldiers were already being prosecuted as violations of the aforementioned laws, instructions and rules. The present statement therefore also serves as a call for witnesses, as the Government has an interest in any additional information on the incidents that were brought to public attention over social media. Relevant allegations may

be sent to the office of the military prosecutor of FARDC in Kinshasa or to the offices of the military prosecutors of the higher military courts of Mbuji-Mayi and Kananga.

(*Signed*) Lambert **Mende Omalanga**
Minister of Communications and the Media
Government spokesperson